

# OPEN DUMPS

## At a Glance

Number of open dumps in  
Kentucky ..... 3,300

Violations cited for  
illegal dumping and  
littering (1999)  
state ..... 563  
county ..... 4,145

Number of open dumps  
cleaned  
1995 ..... 1,761  
1997 ..... 3,043  
1999 ..... 2,304

Cost to cleanup open  
dumps (1999)  
..... \$6.3 million

## Indicator 5. Open Dumps

**Background** Each and every day, tons of garbage are illegally dumped in rivers, down hillsides and along roads, polluting the environment and despoiling the beauty of Kentucky's landscape. While the exact amount of garbage illegally disposed of is unknown, thousands of open dumps attest to the fact that illegal dumping remains a considerable problem in the Commonwealth.

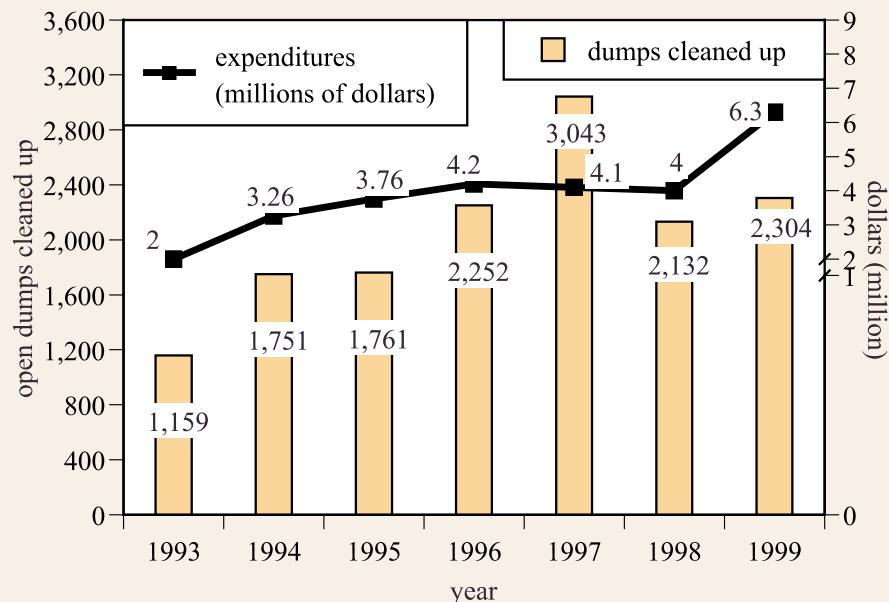
An estimated 84 percent of the state's households participated in some type of garbage collection in 1999. It is not known how the remaining 16 percent disposed of an estimated 3.5 million pounds of garbage a day. Some of this waste may have been hauled to a collection station or landfill, however, an estimated seven percent (1.5 million pounds per day) is illegally dumped.

**Goal** To encourage state and local governments, business, industry, civic groups, environmental groups and citizens to work together to clean up Kentucky and to educate citizens about the importance of proper garbage disposal.

**Progress** The state has made impressive gains during the past few years in cleaning up open dumps. In 1996, the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet (Cabinet) initiated a campaign to stop illegal dumping. The Cabinet joined other agencies to promote greater public awareness of the threats posed by illegal dumping and to step up enforcement of open-dump laws. A statewide toll-free hotline (1-888-NO-DUMPS) was established in April 1996 to provide Kentuckians an opportunity to report open dumps. More than 3,000 complaints have since been logged on the report-a-dump hotline.

As a result of the state campaign and the efforts of local solid waste management officials and other organizations such as PRIDE (an eastern Kentucky organization established to promote positive environmental action), 2,304 open dumps were reported cleaned up in 1999. That year, county officials issued 4,145 citations for illegal dumping, littering and failure to

Measure 1. Open Dump Cleanups and Expenditures in Kentucky



# WASTE MANAGEMENT

## OPEN DUMPS

participate in mandatory garbage collection systems. Of the 4,145 citations, 999 resulted in court actions. Fayette County led the state with 2,172 citations issued in 1999, followed by Jefferson County with 619 citations.

The Cabinet has inspected 3,887 illegal dumps and issued 3,075 notices of violation since 1997, resulting in violators cleaning up 1,063 illegal dumps. Since December 1997, the Cabinet has also placed video surveillance equipment at 92 illegal open dumps and has recorded 109 instances of people illegally disposing of waste. This initiative has resulted in 63 notices of violation, \$50,000 in fines, and orders to pick up and dispose almost 200 tons of garbage. However, the Cabinet estimates that at least 3,300 dumps still exist in Kentucky, and more are discovered every day. During the year 2000, the state received 620 illegal dump complaints.

Many counties have hired solid waste coordinators to promote proper solid waste management. Counties with solid waste coordinators have steadily increased—from 40 in 1992, 88 in 1995, to 102 in 1999. Ninety counties have also enacted open dump ordinances to give local officials authority to cite and prosecute violators.

State efforts to address the problem of waste tires continue. Each year, Kentuckians produce 3.8 million waste tires. In 1998, the state spent \$2.6 million to clean up seven waste tire piles containing an estimated 2.8 million tires. During 1999, another \$1.12 million was spent to clean up 11 tire piles containing 457,092 tires. The General Assembly passed House Bill 636 in 1998 to strengthen the state's waste tire program. A \$1 fee for each new tire purchased is used to clean up tire piles and prevent new ones. A major initiative of the program is county-based tire amnesty programs to collect waste tires on a onetime basis free of charge from individuals, farmers and small businesses. By 2002, all counties will hold waste tire amnesty days. In 1998, five counties held amnesty days and collected 43,915 waste tires. In 1999, 22 counties held amnesty days and collected 734,603 tires. In the year 2000, 45 counties hosted amnesty days and collected 2.4 million tires. The tire fee will expire on July 31, 2002.

County and state programs spend an estimated \$8 million a year to address roadside litter. A statewide cleanup initiative, entitled Commonwealth Cleanup Week, was established by the legislature in 1998 to promote community involvement in cleaning up roadsides and open dumps. Commonwealth Cleanup Week netted 106,000 bags of trash in 1999 and 2000 and involved more than 36,000 volunteers. Efforts to pass a bottle bill to tackle the litter problem in Kentucky failed to gain support in the 2000 and 2001 legislative sessions.

### *Measures - notes and sources*

*Measure 1. Source: Ky. Division of Waste Management, County Solid Waste Reports.*